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Via ECFS
Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: In the Matter of Petition of USTelecom for Forbearance Pursuant to
47 U.S.C. Section 160(c); WC Docket No. 18-141; Category 1**

Dear FCC,

It is my understanding you were recently petitioned to take current access to critical unbundled network elements away from local Internet Service Providers. I want you to know that if this change is approved, I will view it as a serious attack on MY freedom, and a clear indication the FCC has been "bought". If this happens, it will seriously undermine my confidence in the FCC, and all in my small circle of friends who look to me for street-savvy advise.

In early 2005, I made the switch from dial-up to Broadband. When I made the switch, I heavily researched Broadband DSL providers in my area. One company consistently came out on top - a local service provider based in Santa Rosa - Sonic.net. The key for me was their reputation for service. Almost to a person, people leaving reviews indicated when problems surfaced, they got quick access to a knowledgeable, local individual who got them the information needed to resolve the issue "pronto". That's what I wanted. That's what I needed! I did not need another person wasting my time reading from a computer screen in India and asking me if my modem cable was plugged in.

As a professional involved in Pharma and Medical Device manufacturing - often for virtual companies manufacturing their products worldwide - both my time and the quality of my ISP service are incredibly valuable.

So, I signed up with Sonic.net.

In the 13+ years I've been with Sonic, I can honestly say that I feel that no company from which I buy products or services from has shown me they "have my back" more than Sonic.net. In short, for me, Sonic.net has validated the fact that the 1996 Telecommunications Act actually WORKS.

Sonic.net DSL service was virtually flawless for over 10 years. On the few occasions where problems arose, a short call resolved the issue in minutes. In fact, on one occasion, a contractor working at my home accidentally nipped an Ethernet cable. A 15 minute call to Sonic.net led me directly to the source of the problem - and technically, it was my fault! There is no way I could have tracked down this issue using the call center approaches provided by AT&T or Comcast. I

know, 'cause I've been on the phone with those companies while helping my friends through their service issues. Just a small but telling example of what advantages to the consumer, true competition provides.

When Sonic.net accessed technology to make my Internet access faster, more reliable, and more integrated, they passed it on to me immediately - often with no or minimal cost increase. This was implemented through several updated DSL protocols, then DSL fusion routing, and now through a build-out of a fiber network staying ahead of the curve of 21st century data networking needs. In all these service upgrades, it was Sonic.net who notified me of the availability to upgrade at little or no cost increase. This is in stark contrast to the data-throttling business models pursued by AT&T and the huge cable conglomerates.

Indeed, it is because of Sonic.net's fiber success that AT&T is now being forced to build out a fiber network in my area and compete with Sonic.net instead of doing what they'd rather do - spend their money on advertising and FCC lobbyists to prevent true competition, and minimize value to their customers in order to pay for it.

Make no mistake about it - if Sonic.net did not exist, there would be no fiber service offered in this area today. The fact that we now have this option in 2018 is a direct result of competition brought about by the 1996 Telecommunications Act.

The intent of the 1996 Telecommunications Act was to promote competition for the benefit of the consumer. The spirit of the Act was to prevent incumbent companies (like AT&T) from using their incumbent position to block competition.

The recent petition to take current access to critical unbundled network elements away from local Internet Service Providers violates the intent of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, and is an attack on the consumer. Namely, me. I have come to entrust Sonic.net with my Internet access, my voice service, and my email because providing exceptional consumer value and trust is the way they compete. None of this would have happened without the competition Sonic.net has been able to provide as a result of the 1996 Telecommunications Act.

As a consumer whose livelihood depends on advanced and reliable data and voice services, I reiterate I will be watching the FCC's final decision in this matter closely. I ask that you honor the intent of the 1996 Telecommunications Act as it applies to the consumer and reject the petition to alter current access to critical unbundled network elements necessary to existence of local Internet Service Providers.

Timothy Riddle